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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to train eight adolescents with specific learning disabilities (SLD) about their legal rights and responsibilities, through a scenario-based program presented in the classroom as part of a transition program. The practicum involved the development of 22 scenarios, a pretest and posttest, and discussions and role-playing sessions with the scenarios. Among topics covered by the scenarios were: shoplifting, fatherhood (rights and responsibilities), routine traffic stop, disorderly conduct, assault and battery, parents' authority and responsibilities, fireworks, school attendance, school's authority, handicapped rights, labor laws, driver's license rights and responsibilities, use of telephone, trespassing, age of majority, motorcycle usage, and rights in court. Results indicated that students increased their knowledge of their legal rights and responsibilities and also gained skill in making thoughtful decisions in this area. (Contains 13 references.) (Author/DB)

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What Did I Do?
A Scenario-based Program to Assist Specific Learning Disabled Adolescents in Understanding Legal Issues

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by

Donna M. McDougall

Cluster 52A

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A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Donna M. McDougall under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

8-12-93
Date of Final Approval of Report

Mary W. Staggs, Ed.D.
Mary W. Staggs, Ed.D., Adviser

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ABSTRACT

What Did I Do? A Scenario-based Program to Assist Specific Learning Disabled Adolescents in Understanding Legal Issues. McDougall, Donna M., 1993: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Special Education/Legal Responsibility/Secondary Education/Legal Education/ Delinquency/PL 94-142/IDEA/Transition Services.

This practicum was designed to train Specific Learning Disabled adolescents in their legal rights and responsibilities through a scenario-based program that was presented in the classroom as part of the transition program to a target population of eight SLD high school students.

The writer developed 22 scenarios, administered a pretest and posttest, and led discussions and role-playing sessions.

Analysis of the results of the posttest and the discussions and role-playing indicated that the targeted students had increased their knowledge of their legal rights and responsibilities. They also received practice in making thoughtful decisions in this area.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The writer is currently employed as a special education teacher in a small rural community in the Southwestern United States. Historically, this has been a single industry community, depending on a local copper mine for employment. This mine was closed for a number of years and has just recently reopened to a limited extent. Unfortunately for the community, the greatest demand was for trained laborers which kept the economic impact of the reopening from being as great as was hoped.

For much of the population it has become a bedroom community with the adults being employed in neighboring metropolitan areas. This requires a lengthy commute and tends to leave local children unsupervised a great deal of time.

According to the 1990 Census, 23% of the community households are at or below poverty level. Of 71 original businesses in the community, 49 have either closed or moved to other communities. Many of the more affluent families, particularly the white/nonHispanic families, currently send their

children to public schools in neighboring towns because they perceive those schools as having more programs available to the students. There is also considerable feeling that those other schools are of higher quality scholastically and, thus, more likely to prepare their children for college.

The high school consists of four buildings. Two of those buildings are not handicap-accessible. While two of the buildings are relatively new, the main building has been strongly considered for demolition because of extensive structural faults.

The high school currently has 184 students, 15 teachers, 2 administrators and a counselor. The student population is 78% Hispanic, 39% white/nonHispanic and 2% Native American. Despite the high proportion of Hispanic students, only 1 of the 15 teachers is Hispanic. Three of the teachers, one of the administrators and the counselor have Masters degrees. Two of the teachers, both administrators and the counselor share their time with either the elementary school or the junior high school in the district.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer is currently employed as a Special Education teacher, working primarily with Specific Learning Disabled (SLD) students. High school classes in English, Math, and Reading are taught in the mornings and elementary classes in the afternoons. This is the first year in this position. The writer currently has an M.Ed. in counseling and is certified in Secondary Education. Special education certification is currently being obtained while working under an emergency certificate.

For the previous four years the writer was a clinical counselor in this same geographical area, working primarily with adolescents in the various area

high schools. About 80% of the caseload were seen at the local schools in individual or group sessions. A close alliance was formed with school personnel, and therapy was enhanced because this permitted a team approach with troubled adolescents. The current job was a direct result of that alliance with school personnel.

Prior to that time, the writer worked as a counselor and remedial English teacher for Native American adolescents for three and one-half years.

The writer's current responsibilities include teaching SLD classes at the high school and the elementary school, evaluating potential special education students, attending Child Study meetings and Multidisciplinary Committee meetings, and devising intervention strategies for SLD and Emotionally Disabled (ED) students. A transition program is required for those special education students who are 16 years or older, and the writer shares the responsibility of implementing this with another high school special education teacher.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Comparisons of student histories indicate that Specific Learning Disabled (SLD) adolescents have more negative contacts with law enforcement personnel than the general population. These contacts may be encounters with local police officers that are the result of questionable activities or attitudes on the part of the SLD students, or they may be more serious contacts resulting in probation or incarceration in the juvenile detention system. Regardless of the nature of the contact, it can readily be demonstrated that the SLD adolescents get themselves into more trouble, and that to a certain extent at least, this trouble results from their ignorance of legal matters.

Because this is a small community, once adolescents are identified as "troublemakers" by the local law enforcement personnel, they tend to retain that identification. The SLD adolescents do not have the verbal skills to defend themselves against this type of characterization and often fall into that role out of anger and defensiveness.

Briefly stated, the problem is that SLD students get into more trouble than the general population.

Problem Documentation

There is considerable evidence that SLD adolescents get into more trouble, and that it is due, at least partly, to ignorance of legal matters. In the writer's school 80% of the SLD males and 50% of the SLD females have been in trouble with the law as compared to 24% of the total population males and 7% of the total population females in the same school. Of the population of the entire county only 9% of the juveniles have been in legal difficulties. This certainly indicates that SLD adolescents are over-represented in the population of those who are in trouble with the law.

That they are ignorant of the law and of their legal rights and responsibilities is amply illustrated by the fact that on a pretest of knowledge of legal rights and responsibilities (see Appendix A) SLD adolescents scored between 31% and 61% correct answers. They were uninformed on very basic material, including various legal ages and even what actions are illegal.

Also, numerous anecdotes demonstrate this ignorance of legal rights and responsibilities. A seventh grade student stated that he was not guilty of his charges because, "All I did was be lookout."

A conversation with a ninth grade student went as follows.

"What is it called when you beat someone up for his money?"

"Mugging."

"Well, does it count if you don't get the money?"

"Yes."

An eighth grade student stated that he was innocent of the charges against him but wasn't sure he could prove it. He explained that he had been seen somewhere else that night but didn't know if that person could be persuaded to

come to court on his behalf. He was unaware of the right to subpoena witnesses.

Another ninth grade male had been told by a local police officer that he was "on probation." Despite the fact that he had never had contact with a juvenile probation officer or with the courts, this student was afraid that if he made any mistakes or even took part in extra-curricular activities at school, he would attract attention and immediately go to jail.

These anecdotes illustrate the lack of information and the incorrect information that SLD adolescents tend to have.

Causative Analysis

There are many causes for the legal problems that SLD adolescents have. They range from a cultural tendency to perceive poor students as "troublemakers" to the difficulty that SLD adolescents often have in verbalizing their thoughts. These poor verbalization skills make them vulnerable in that they are frequently unable to explain themselves to an official's satisfaction.

Since it would be extremely difficult to address all the potential causes for this problem, this practicum will focus on four major causes.

First, SLD adolescents are ignorant of the laws that govern their actions. They are simply unaware that some of their actions are illegal and that those actions render them vulnerable to legal charges.

Second, SLD adolescents are ignorant of their rights under the law. When they do get into trouble, they become victims of the process because they are unaware of the rights that are guaranteed to them by the law. They are also very unaware of their rights as handicapped individuals under Public Law 94-142 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Thus, they are

unable to avail themselves of potential programs as well as standard legal safeguards.

Third, SLD adolescents are ignorant of their responsibilities under the law. To be viable, a society must be able to expect certain things from its citizens in exchange for the privileges that it extends to them. SLD adolescents tend not to know what is expected from them in terms of the responsibilities of parenthood, their obligations to the Selective Service, the need to respect property and privacy rights of others and the myriad other things required of all individuals.

Fourth, SLD adolescents tend to have poor decision-making skills. Decisions, whether conscious or not, precede all actions. While there are, again, a number of causes of poor decision-making among this population, a primary cause is incorrect or insufficient information. An effective decision cannot possibly be made without all the data that relates to it. If SLD adolescents do not know that a given action is illegal, they cannot possibly make a good decision about its appropriateness. Similarly, they cannot decide to exercise rights of which they are unaware. Effective decision-making requires the availability of sufficient and accurate information as well as an opportunity to practice the making of decisions.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of the literature supports that this problem exists. Increasing delinquency is a major concern nationwide. A review of some 1992 state reports that address legal difficulties of juveniles indicates a 16% increase in juveniles incarcerated in state correctional facilities between 1986 and 1990 and a 28%

increase in juvenile arrests between 1985 and 1990. The number of juveniles who are in trouble is increasing rapidly, and many of them are learning disabled.

The connection between delinquency and learning disabilities is supported by Cornwall and Bawden (1992) who found a significant correlation between reading disabilities and aggressive acts. In one area during a three month period in 1989 25.5% of adjudicated youth were considered to be handicapped (LaCoste, 1989). In addition, Shoemaker (1990) states that some theorists have indicated that delinquent youth have poorer intellectual abilities than non-delinquent youth.

Delinquency among adolescents in general is attributed to several causes. In an essay on the severe problem of delinquency a local area lawyer attributes the problem to inadequate prevention measures. Learning disabilities are frequently considered to be a causal factor in delinquency (Cornwall & Bawden, 1992; LaCoste, 1989). While she does not directly cite learning disabilities as a contributing factor, Dryfoos (1990) correlates delinquency with poor academic performance which frequently accompanies learning disabilities.

The lack of knowledge that adolescents have regarding legal matters is another contributing factor which is cited by Peterson, Timmons, Lintonen, and Fischer (1977) and Dale, Multine, O'Neill, Titla, and Wilks (1982). These authors feel that insufficient information about the law makes it difficult for many young people to stay out of trouble.

Individuals with learning disabilities tend to be characterized by an external locus of control. This contributes to their poor social and emotional adjustment and is a factor in their tendency towards delinquency (Omizo & Omizo, 1987).

The literature on adolescent decision-making skills does not directly address the question of delinquency; however, decision-making plays an

important role. Schvaneveldt and Adams (1983) review the literature on adolescent decision-making and compare several current theories. In their view most adolescents use one of two styles. The "good enough" style involves selecting an option based on meeting a minimum number of critical factors. Rather than searching for an optimum number of favorable factors, one settles for something that "will do," The intuitive style bases decisions on feelings and emotions; the decision "feels right."

They also found that those adolescents who have had considerable practice in decision-making when young are more likely to be able to cope with adult decisions. The more practice they have, the better equipped they are to make appropriate lifestyle choices.

The question of adolescent decision-making skills and the determination of the factors that contribute to competence in this area are discussed by Mann, Harmoni and Power (1989). They look briefly at theories that consider information-processing important, but focus their attention on other factors. In their view the elements of competent decision-making are choice, comprehension, creativity, compromise, consequentiality, correctness, credibility, consistency, and commitment. They then qualify this by stating that not all of these factors have equal importance and are inter-related. They also stress the importance of practice in decision making.

Ross (1982) initially appears to take a simpler view of decision-making in that he postulates only three components: knowledge, affect and skill. However, his system quickly takes on complexity as he identifies five levels for each component. These levels range, within each component, from lack of information, naivety, and self-centeredness to understanding and applying general principles, sophistication, and focusing on the needs of others. Again,

the importance of practice in the making of decisions is emphasized in order to acquire skill in the process.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was that the targeted SLD adolescents would develop strategies for avoiding trouble with the law. Nine SLD adolescents at the writer's high school were identified to participate in the proposed practicum program. While this number is small, it was limited by the available population of SLD adolescents. Only eight of them remained in school long enough to complete the program. These adolescents live in the small community previously described. Because it is a small community, the police force is necessarily small and not as sophisticated as it would be in a major metropolitan area. For this reason the targeted adolescents need to learn, not just the relevant laws that apply to them, but also ways of responding to law enforcement personnel that will mitigate rather than exacerbate a given situation.

Expected Outcomes

Several outcomes were expected from this practicum. One outcome was that the nine targeted SLD adolescents would be able to demonstrate knowledge of laws that apply to them. They would become aware of the laws and would be able to base their decisions about actions on an accurate understanding of relevant laws.

That the targeted SLD adolescents would demonstrate a knowledge of their legal rights and responsibilities was a second anticipated outcome of the practicum. They would demonstrate familiarity with their rights as handicapped individuals, particularly those dealing with educational settings.

A third expected outcome was that the targeted SLD adolescents would demonstrate their newly acquired strategies for dealing with law enforcement personnel. They demonstrated this through role playing and through discussion. These strategies included methods of communication as well as acquisition of knowledge.

A last outcome was that the nine targeted SLD adolescents would reduce their contact with law enforcement personnel and juvenile probation officers. This is a long term goal, and it is not possible to measure it at this time. However, it represents the ultimate purpose of the practicum.

Measurement of Outcomes

As stated above, the final outcome of reducing contact with law enforcement personnel cannot be measured at this time, but it is a desired result.

The acquisition of knowledge of laws and of legal rights and responsibilities was measured by the administration of a posttest. The scores on the posttest were compared to the scores on the pretest. It was expected that the scores of the targeted SLD adolescents would improve to an average of 80%.

The targeted SLD adolescents were to demonstrate their new knowledge of strategies for dealing with law enforcement personnel through role playing. A comprehensive journal record of the role playing activities and discussions was kept.

A journal record was also kept of more informal discussions among the targeted population as well. This helped to demonstrate the changes in the targeted population's knowledge and strategies.

Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events

A comprehensive journal was kept of all student responses, questions, formal and informal discussions pertaining to the practicum material. This permitted assessment of unexpected responses and activities from the targeted population. Ultimately it also provided a means for determining the effectiveness of the practicum strategies.

Description of Plans for Analyzing Results

Results were analyzed primarily in two different ways. First, the scores of the targeted SLD adolescents on the posttest of knowledge of laws and legal rights and responsibilities were compared with their scores on the pretest. Changes were indicated, and the areas of greatest change are discussed.

Second, the journal was carefully assessed. Differences in types of student

questions and in sophistication of discussion over time were looked at. Changes in role playing skills were described and assessed.

Finally, the targeted population was encouraged to do a self-evaluation. They were asked to determine increases in knowledge. They were also asked to assess increases in confidence levels regarding situations where they encounter law enforcement personnel.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

SLD adolescents have more negative contacts with law enforcement personnel than the general population. These contacts range from encounters with local police officers that are the result of questionable activities or attitudes to more serious contacts resulting in probation or incarceration in the juvenile detention system. Regardless of the nature of the contact, it can be readily demonstrated that the SLD adolescents get themselves into more trouble, and that this trouble frequently results from their ignorance of legal matters.

The problem of delinquency among SLD adolescents, just as among any adolescent population, is very complex. There is no one cause for the problem, and no one solution will cure it. At best, it can be hoped that given interventions will help to mitigate this pervasive social concern.

People who are working within the juvenile system see a great need for prevention programs (McDougall, 1992). If interventions are not made in families long before delinquent behavior develops, there is little chance that

the juvenile justice system can contain the problem.

A number of prevention strategies have been recommended. The school experience could be restructured to enhance academic performance as there is a high correlation between delinquency and academic success. High-risk individuals could receive a high level of individual attention and support which tends to be lacking in their home life. Training in social skills and community-based prevention programs, such as after school and weekend activities, would also serve as preventatives for delinquency (Dryfoos, 1990).

LaCoste (1989) specifically addresses the problem of handicapped adolescents who get into trouble and recommends that information be provided to the courts about the existence of those handicaps. When the courts are aware of these mitigating situations, alternative sentencing can be considered so that adolescents are not penalized because of their handicaps. In a similar vein, Cornwall and Bawden (1992) propose that since there is a correlation between reading disabilities and aggressive behavior which often leads to delinquency, the treatment of those reading disabilities will help to prevent later behavioral problems.

Another prevention program is discussed by Omizo and Omizo (1987) who report favorably on the results of using group counseling for learning disabled children. This modality is used to assist the children to acquire an internal locus of control which enables them to behave in socially approved ways.

Ross (1982) reports the results of a series of studies on the teaching of decision-making skills. A classroom setting was used, and the focus was on the presentation of values learning. Some success was reported.

The question of adolescents' lack of knowledge of legal issues is addressed by several writers. A program presented by Peterson et al. (1977) teaches legal

matters through the use of short scenarios followed by short-answer questions. This program is designed for advanced students who have access to other information about basic laws and seems to be intended as a supplement to a civics class. The program presented by Brion-Meisels et al. (1982) teaches legal matters through the use of lectures followed by short quizzes. This has the disadvantage of being almost identical to the other types of learning at which SLD adolescents appear to be unsuccessful. The third method of presenting legal knowledge to adolescents involved the use of short pamphlets that are designed to be read by adolescents (Dale et al., 1982 & Jacobs, 1992). Both are excellent sources of information if the targeted population do, in fact, read them.

The difficulties inherent in the above solutions range from the necessity of a high level of money and time resources to overcoming the resistance of the targeted population to the method. If the students are unresponsive to standard academic material, they are likely not to respond to legal information when it is presented in the same format. The other drawback is even simpler; both time and money are in short supply.

There are some other possible solutions that were not proposed in the literature. Given the fascination of today's young people with computer technology, a computer-based program would be a good method of either teaching legal material or teaching decision-making skills. If it were presented in a game format, it would be even more effective.

An exhaustive program for providing family-based support, including parenting training, would enhance adolescents' self-esteem and decision-making skills which would assist in reducing delinquency. If this program could be put in place when the children are quite young, it would be especially effective. Again, this is a long-range and potentially costly solution.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

A program was presented to nine targeted SLD adolescents at the high school in which the writer is employed. This program used a short scenario/game format to teach pertinent laws and legal rights and responsibilities and to provide practice in making appropriate decisions. Each student was given a page with a short scenario and a choice of decisions to be made based on that scenario. Each potential decision led to a different page in a small-format, bound notebook with which they were also provided. The pages of the notebook contained the various solutions and potential outcomes for each scenario in a random arrangement. That is, a student who decided upon action A was directed to a given page. Action B was directed to a different page. The format is similar to that of an interactive adventure novel. They were asked to note their choices on the scenario paper and to respond to some questions at the end of some of the scenarios. Those questions were used as the basis for formal and informal discussions and for role playing. The list of topics for the scenarios is given in Appendix B.

This was successful because one of the reasons that SLD adolescents get into trouble is that they do not fully understand the laws that apply to them. This is illustrated by the anecdotal evidence and the results of the pretest.

The information was presented in short, entertaining segments which held the students' interest, and this contributed to the success of the program. It also led to the SLD adolescents avoiding activities in which they previously indulged because they became aware of the legal liabilities involved.

Additionally, the program was successful because the decision-making training was an integral part of the program rather than a separate discipline.

In fact, the students were not really aware that they were receiving decision-making training which lowered potential resistance.

This program took into account the SLD adolescents' low academic skills and their need for verbalization practice as well as their need to role play difficult situations.

Report of Action Taken

The program consisted of three main parts, an introduction, the main body of the program which was the scenarios and the role playing, and the conclusion.

During the first week the concepts of the program were introduced to the nine targeted SLD students at the writer's high school who were the subjects for the program. The goals of the program and the methodology were presented and discussed. It was introduced as part of the transition program that is included in the curriculum for all SLD students.

During week two through week eleven the material of the program was presented to the subjects at the rate of two scenarios per week. (See Appendix B.) The students were provided time to respond to the material individually, and if they chose to do so, in group discussion sessions that provided reinforcement for the learning. Some of the material was selected for role playing exercises, specifically those scenarios that deal with interactions with law enforcement personnel. For example, after doing the scenario about a routine traffic stop, the students role played it.

The students were encouraged to compare their own experiences with the situations they encountered in the scenarios and to analyze the differences. During this nine week period of time the students' dialogue journal topics were

selected to reflect the material in the scenarios.

During the twelfth week the posttest was given to assess the target population's increase in learning about laws and legal rights and responsibilities. The students were also asked to evaluate informally the learning that had taken place and the changes that they perceived in their abilities to deal with legal matters. Closure was achieved through conferences with individuals and through group discussion.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem is that SLD adolescents have more negative contacts with law enforcement personnel than the general population, ranging rrom encounters with local police officers that result from questionable activities or attitudes to more serious contacts that result in probation or incarceration in the juvenile system. Despite the nature of the contact, it is readily demonstrable that SLD adolescents get into more trouble and that this trouble frequently results from their ignorance of legal matters.

This program was designed to assist SLD adolescents to avoid trouble with the law and to gain an understanding of their rights and responsibilities under the law.

The first expected outcome was that the targeted SLD students would demonstrate a knowledge of the laws that apply to them. This was measured by comparing posttest scores with the scores on the pretest. As shown in Table 1, the scores did not rise as much as anticipated; however, substantial gains were achieved. The range of correct answers on the pretest was from 31% correct to 69%. On the posttest the range of correct answers was from 50%

correct to 81%. An interesting result was that incorrect answers on the pretest tended to result from student thinking that illegal acts were legal. On the posttest the students erred on the side of caution–they tended to consider legal acts as illegal. In a sense this may be considered a gain in that they are less complacent about what they do. Table 2 provides an analysis of c rrect and incorrect responses.

The second outcome, that the targeted SLD students would demonstrate a knowledge of their legal rights and responsibilities was measured in two ways. First, the pretest and posttest measured part of it. Second, the students' discussion indicated an increasing sophistication as the program continued. Many topics that were not covered in the scenarios came up for discussion as students sought information on such subjects as how to license and insure a car and how to register to vote.

Table 1

Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores

	Pretest		Posttest		Gains
Student	# Corr	% Corr	# Corr	% Corr	
1	5/16	31%	10/16	63%	+5
2	11/16	69%	10/16	63%	-1
3	11/16	69%	11/16	69%	0
4	9/16	56%	13/16	81%	+4
5	7/16	44%	10/16	63%	+2
6	8/16	50%	10/16	63%	+2
7	5/16	31%	8/16	50%	+3
8	9/16	56%	8/16	50%	-1
Mean	6.88	55%	8.75	63%	+1.83

Table 2

Comparison of Pretest and Posttest

	Pretest		Posttest	
Question	Correct	Incorrect	Correct	Incorrect
1.	9	0	7	1
2.	2	7	5	3
3.	8	1	7	1
4.	1	8	4	4
5.	3	6	1	7
6.	5	4	7	1
7.	3	6	2	6
8.	4	5	4	4
9.	0	9	2	6
10.	6	3	7	1
11.	8	1	7	1
12.	9	0	8	0
13.	7	2	5	3
14.	5	4	5	3
15.	5	4	3	5
16.	3	6	6	2

The third projected outcome was that the targeted SLD students would demonstrate their new knowledge of strategies for dealing with law enforcement personnel through role playing. Scenarios #4 and #5 dealt directly with this issue. Despite the inevitable giggling and horseplay the students did appear to gain an understanding of how to be assertive about their rights without being offensive and how to minimize a difficult situation.

Comments from the students during the last week indicated that they had a better understanding of the issues that were covered during the program. They stated that they now knew more about legal matters and had an understanding of how "the system works." In at least one case a potential problem was averted because he was under the impression that an only child did not have to register for the draft with the Selective Service.

As stated above, the last outcome was that the targeted SLD students reduce their contact with law enforcement personnel and juvenile probation officers. While it cannot be measured at this time, at least none of the students were arrested during the program.

Discussion

While gains were made in the area of knowledge, even more important gains were made in the area of understanding how our culture works. Statements such as: "I know more about the law now." indicate that the targeted students feel more confident about their ability to function as adults. All the students agreed that the scenario format was better than a lecture since, as one student candidly stated, "I don't always listen."

Inevitably, some of the student responses revealed deep-seated biases. Several heated discussions developed over the subject of fathers' rights and

responsibilities, particularly when one young man indicated that pregnancy was just the result of the girl's irresponsibility. Other students expressed resentment of the support laws which they saw as unfairly penalizing the father while leaving the mother free from financial worry. Approximately half of the students were from divorced homes, so these were very real issues to them.

Another important issue that arose during the program was how to change unjust laws. The students tended to start the program with a naive, it's-the-law-so-it's-right attitude. As discussions progressed, they began to cast a more critical eye on the subject matter. When the question of change first occurred, the prevailing attitude was "it's the law so we're stuck with it." The writer first had the students look at local school rules and assess their appropriateness. The students then brainstormed ways to bring about change. The classroom instructional aide was very helpful at this point as she has lived in the community all her life and was able to give the students concrete examples of changes that individuals had caused. It was a very easy matter to generalize this discussion to state and federal laws. An unexpected outcome then was that the program helped to reduce the learned helplessness of the students.

The students frequently initiated discussions relating to the scenario topics. After the shoplifting scenario one student talked about a friend who received a $250 fine and a police record for stealing a Snickers bar. This was directed into a general discussion of the liabilities of a police record, especially in a small town.

In the area of coping with their own disabilities, the students also made gains. Even though some of them were high school seniors, none of them had

ever attended their own Individual Education Plan meetings. This year all of them attended, and they took an active role in planning goals and objectives for the future.

Recommendations

The success of this program was not just the result of an effective format. It was also the result of the students' genuine desire to know this material. It is strongly recommended that it be made available to all students, not just those who are SLD students, because the SLD students are not the only ones who get into trouble.

While this program targeted senior high school students, it is also recommended that the material be made available to younger populations as well. Students begin getting into trouble at a very early age; many have been arrested long before entering high school. Some modifications may need to be made to adapt the material for younger students and for the general population, but they would be well worth the effort.

While the information may need to be adapted, the format should stay the same. The scenario/action novel approach engages the student into the process. They are required to reflect several times during the course of the scenario and to make decisions based on what knowledge they have. Feedback is immediate, and they are encouraged to reflect at the end of the scenario.

Dissemination

The writer has applied for a grant from the Juvenile Justice Department of the state Govenor's Office for Children. This grant would allow publication of

enough material to provide a copy of the program to each high school in one county. Based on the success of this effort, further funding will be sought to provide the material on a state-wide basis.

It was the writer's original intention to submit the material for national publication; however, most of the material reflects state law and that tends to vary widely from state to state.

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APPENDIX A

PRETEST

DO YOU KNOW?

	You are:	You are:
1. A mall security guard tells you to leave. You return to shop and are arrested for trespassing.	Guilty	Not guilty
2. You didn't know your friend took a candy bar, and you are arrested for shoplifting.	Guilty	Not guilty
3. You put a piece of candy in your pocket, but you have not left the store. You are arrested for shoplifting.	Guilty	Not guilty
4. You buy cigarettes for your father. You are arrested.	Guilty	Not guilty
5. You agree to meet another student and fight. You are charged with assault.	Guilty	Not guilty
6. Your parents give you permission to shoot firecrackers in the backyard. You are arrested.	Guilty	Not guilty
7. You are ticketed because your passenger in the back seat is not wearing a seat belt.	Guilty	Not guilty
8. Your parents let you buy a lottery ticket. You are charged with gambling.	Guilty	Not guilty
9. You are 13 and are charged with fishing without a license.	Guilty	Not guilty
10. You call someone on the phone and tell them to "Go to ___!" You are arrested.	Guilty	Not guilty
11. You are a motorcycle passenger and are charged with riding without a helmet.	Guilty	Not guilty
12. You threaten to beat up a smaller person and are charged with assault.	Guilty	Not guilty
	This is:	This is:
13. You lose your job changing oil at the gas station when they learn you are 15.	Right	Wrong
14. You are told you can't have a morning paper route until you are 16 because you can't work before 6:00 a.m.	Right	Wrong
15. You are hired at the DQ, but can only work 15 hours a week during the school year because you are 14.	Right	Wrong
16. A special ed student is entitled to stay in school until age 22.	Right	Wrong

APPENDIX B

LIST OF SCENARIOS

LIST OF SCENARIOS

1. Shoplifting
2. Fatherhood - rights
3. Fatherhood - responsibilities
4. Routine traffic stop
5. Pick up for questioning
6. Disorderly conduct
7. Assault (and battery)
8. Parents' authority
9. Parents' responsibilities
10. Fireworks
11. School attendance
12. School's authority
13. Handicapped rights
14. Handicapped rights (2)
15. Labor laws
16. Labor laws (2)
17. Driver's license rights & responsibilities
18. Use of telephone
19. Trespass
20. Age of majority
21. Motorcycle usage
22. Rights in court